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without inconvenience, to those who know the facts or persons in ancient history and mythology, to which those names allude, they form a valuable monument of grand historical facts, no less remarkable for the extent of their operation, and the continuance of their influence, which is not yet entirely exhausted, than for the surprising nature and origin of that prodigious power, under which they occurred; which was so far extended and lasted so long, and beneath which all the civilized world once bowed; in short, they form to them a remarkable monument of the history, the customs, the religion, and the great men of the Romans, more lasting than one of brass, or marble, which has continued many centuries unimpaired, and promises fairly to endure for ages to come. Those names then consecrated by their antiquity, having been proved by long trial adequate for the purposes to which they are applied, and being also capable of universal use, and rising conspicuous in comparison with other names and systems, which have either been imagined or partially used in a small extent; and any alteration in them having been shown to be likely to create confusion, and narrow the circle of intelligence, it is hoped that those who read this will be satisfied with the propriety of using them, or at least not be led away by unsupported assertions, to suppose that they are improper, or worthy of rejection.

It is not any wonder however that the class of men, who have been taught to use numeral names for the months from their infancy, (and who do not know the facts above stated, which prevent their universal use,) should think well of them; for custom makes whatever men are used to, seem the best, and the reverse of it the worst, all over the world.—

This applies to all who have left that society, as well as those who continue in it; but the latter have an additional reason for approving of those names. The use of a particular phraseology, has an effect similar to that of wearing a peculiar dress, or uniform, to keep up that *Esprit du corps*, which the leaders of religious, as well as of military associations, find so serviceable to their purposes. Thus the glaring dress and accoutrements of the soldiers, the coul and cassock of the monk, and the singular garb of the quaker, are all uniforms; and the peculiar phraseology adopted by each may be called a vocal uniform, having the same affect as uniforms of apparel, in tending to make them act more readily in a body, and to feel particular preference and regard for their own party, and their opinions and interests, to the exclusion of those of the rest of mankind.

The effects of peculiarity of dress in these respects, has long been known; but those of peculiarity of language have been but little noticed, if at all; but there are many reasons for supposing that the latter is in several respects equally potent with the former for the purposes mentioned, and in some, even a superior efficacy. B.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

SYMBOLS OF PYTHAGORAS.

(Continued from page 8, No. XXX.)

Της λαωφορευ μη βαδιζε.

Go not by the highway.

THE precept of “abstaining from beans,” is ascribed by the general voice of antiquity to Pythagoras, and enrolled among his symbols.—The tradition of his having given up his life to his base pursuers,

rather than attempt to escape them by passing through a field of beans, if it could be established, would also establish the literal acceptance of the symbol, *Abstain from beans*, as well as of the subject of this paper. But how idle must the supposition be, which would exhibit a man of such comprehensive intellect, the slave of such unintelligible follies? Besides, the tradition is very vague, and such a mode of construing his precepts is opposed to the opinion of all, who have considered them, whether they be those of our own time, or those of the age nearest to him, whose writings have reached us. In considering the symbol, then, of *go not by the highway*; we feel ourselves warranted in proceeding in the same manner, as heretofore, to penetrate the veil.

Revolutions have not been confined to the political world. A great and beneficial, though gradual one has been effected in the empire of the mind. Since the destruction of the Aristotelean philosophy and the dissipation of the Cartesian vortices down the gulf of oblivion, true knowledge has been advancing with rapid, yet steady steps; philosophers have come forth from their closets, and instead of searching through folios for *authorities and references* to no useful end, instead of exhausting their health and strength in pursuits, which made no one wiser, they now study for the benefit of mankind, and are no longer *mere statues stepped from their pedestals to take the air*. They now begin to show themselves in the attractive light of superior geniuses condescending to mingle with the world, and directing their abilities to its improvement, and from those qualities, they are so little like the characters, to whom the meed of philosophy has been heretofore a-

warded, that we are reminded of Plato, who, being once a sojourner, where he was not known, bore his faculties someekly, and was so kind, so condescending, and *so useful*, that he was not suspected to be the great philosopher, whose fame sounded loudly forth from Athens. Intense study, total seclusion from the world, and consequently ignorance in its affairs, and therefore uselessness, a cumbersome *second-hand* wisdom; these were the distinguishing characters of the philosophers of the middle ages. According as the darkness of that period was departing, men began to see, that knowledge was something more than mere Latin and Greek, and to understand, that the persons, who were versed in these languages were *not conjurers*. From this has resulted a dangerous extreme, and classical literature seems likely to be as unjustly depreciated, as it was formerly extravagantly extolled.

This train of thought, or something like it, mingles with the ideas generally entertained of the philosophers of Greece. They are supposed to have been persons, who totally abstained from the ordinary pursuits of life, and who would have conceived their dignity lessened by participating in the cares and duties of society. Overlooking the useful activity of the men of science, who now adorn and instruct the world, we obstinately fix our eyes on those reproaches of literature; men, who hoarded up knowledge without use or end, who valued an author in proportion to his obscurity, and, as we may express it, found more pleasure in cracking a nut, than in extracting the kernel. The mean opinion, thus conceived, we transfer to our judgment of a description of men very little like those persons; and perhaps the keen, yet just, abuse poured by Lucian on the self-dub-

bed philosophers of *his* day, serves to confirm this opinion.

In this however, we err widely : the genuine philosophers of Greece were men earnest in the pursuit of wisdom : they sought after that species of knowledge, which influences the actions of men, and advances the interests of society.

Thus Zeno of Elea, distinguished himself by improving the art of reasoning, and by magnanimously exposing himself to the fury of a tyrant, from whose possession he had endeavoured to rescue his native place, he proved, that his was not theoretic wisdom. Zeno, the founder of the stoic sect, aimed at the improvement of mankind by a clear exposition of the excellence of virtue, and hatefulness of vice, exhibiting in his own life such a consistency with his doctrines, as procured him general esteem, and stamped influence on his words. But, without particularising Plato, Aristotle, and others ; Pythagoras is himself a pregnant instance of their active interference in the affairs of men. After having travelled through all the countries, then the depositories of knowledge, he fixed his residence at Crotona in Italy.—Here by the charms of his person, his skill in the manly exercises, and his superiority in mental acquirements, he obtained unlimited influence. This influence he exerted so effectually, that out of a people sunk in sensuality and sloth, he formed, as it were, a new race, distinguished by manly energy, and the useful virtues.

“Go not by the highway,” then cannot be inferred to enjoin seclusion from the world : but would seem rather to contain the advice, conveyed from high authority in the words, “thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” Origen and

Erasmus give nearly the same explanation, and advert to the broad and narrow way spoken of in the new testament. The letter Y, called the Samian letter, from its adaptation by the Samian sage, is supposed to have been chosen to convey similar instruction, or rather, as a varied way of conveying the same instruction. The broad part of the letter represents the way of folly, ignorance, and death, trodden by the multitude—the narrow part stands the representative of the useful course of the wise man, a course, whence man is more liable to deviate, inasmuch as self-control is difficult of attainment, while self-gratification continually solicits.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

REPLY OF SOLON TO OBSERVATIONS
ON HIS PAPER ON THE SUNDAY
SCHOOL-HOUSE.

To the proprietors of the B.M.M.

AT the close of your monthly retrospect of politics for October last, I observed some very severe strictures on my reply to the concluding part of that article, for the preceding month, on the subject of the Sunday School-house then building.

To be replied to by argument, and with temper, is no matter of surprise to me, but to be attacked and abused with such violence on that part of my paper, which was avowedly suppressed—and by my own consent suppressed, has excited a degree of astonishment in my mind which I never expected to feel at the conduct of the managers of the Belfast Magazine. Immediately after the publication of the number for October, I prepared and forwarded a remonstrance, and was told it was sent to one of your ma-